

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD

ABEST Instructions for State Budget by Program 2024–25 Biennium

Data Entry for State Agencies,
Appellate Courts,
and Institutions of Higher Education for the
Eighty-eighth Legislature, Regular Session

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

WWW.LBB.TEXAS.GOV

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DOCUMENT CONVENTIONS

THIS DOCUMENT USES THE FOLLOWING SYMBOLIC CONVENTIONS:



Caution: This symbol warns you of the possible loss of data.



Important: This symbol indicates information you need to know.



Tip: This symbol indicates information that may be useful.

GETTING STARTED

The agency submissions portion of the State Budget by Program System (SBP) is an ABEST webbased application. The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) uses SBP agency submissions to identify more detailed appropriations information such as specific programs funded, the source of program funding, and the related statutory authorization.

Section 34.06 of Senate Bill 1, 82nd Legislature, 1st Called Session, 2011, specifies that it is the intent of the Legislature that the LBB place information on its website that provides additional program detail for items of appropriation in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

For all state agencies, appellate courts, and institutions of higher education (all are referred to as "agencies" in these instructions), ABEST SBP Stage 01 - Agency Submission for the 88th Legislative Session (88R) is initially a copy of the following program details from SBP Stage 51 - Fiscal Size Up from the 87th Legislative Session (87R):

- Program Name
- Description of Program
- State Authority
- Federal Authority

Agency staff <u>can add or change programs</u> contained in ABEST SBP to reflect any changes to programs as a result of the agency's 2024–2025 Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR).

IMPORTANT



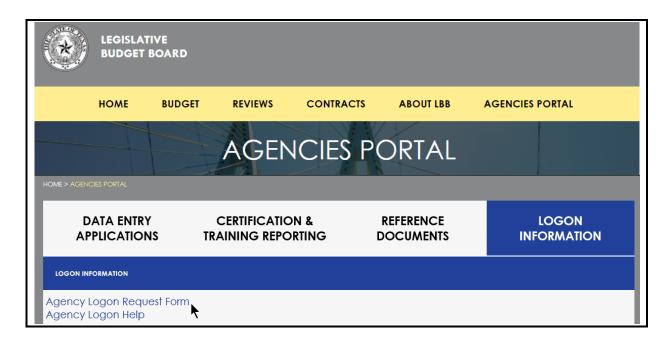
Agency staff <u>cannot delete programs</u> contained in ABEST SBP. If your agency wants to delete a SBP program that is in ABEST, please contact your agency's assigned LBB analyst.

Your agency's SBP submission will include program amounts by Method of Finance (MOF) for fiscal years 2021, 2022, 2023, and baseline requests and exceptional items for fiscal years 2024 and 2025. Program amounts must equal LAR amounts. The recommended approach for entering data is to:

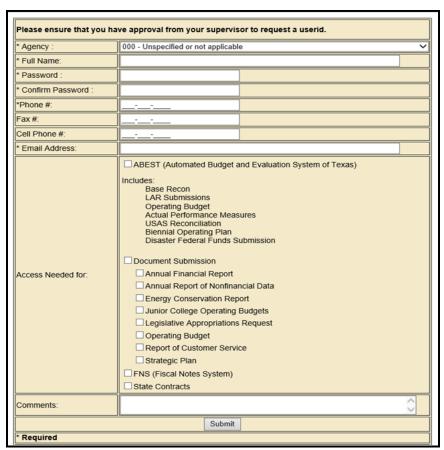
- Refer to this manual for ABEST data entry instructions.
- If you have questions about ABEST, call the LBB Help Desk at 512-463-3167 or email WebAppSupport@lbb.texas.gov.
- Call your agency's LBB budget analyst if you have questions regarding what data to enter or related policy inquiries. A list of analyst assignments is available on the LBB website (www.lbb.texas.gov). From the LBB home page, click ABOUT LBB > Staff > Analyst Assignments.

ACCESSING ABEST

The following steps should be completed to request a user ID and password for ABEST. If you have forgotten your user ID or password, refer to the <u>LOGGING IN</u> section of these instructions. To request a user ID, click **AGENCIES PORTAL** from the LBB website (<u>www.lbb.texas.gov</u>). Under **LOGON INFORMATION**, click **Agency Logon Request Form**, as shown in the following graphic.

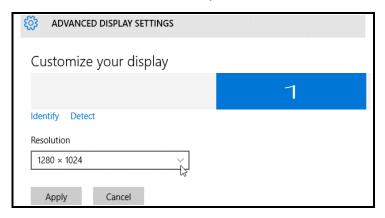


Fill out the **Logon Request Form**, as shown below. When complete, scroll down and click **Submit**. You should receive an email asking you to confirm the logon request. You must respond to the email; otherwise, your request will not be processed. If you do not receive a confirmation email, call the LBB Help Desk at 512-463-3167. The LBB will email you a user ID and password for ABEST within one business day.

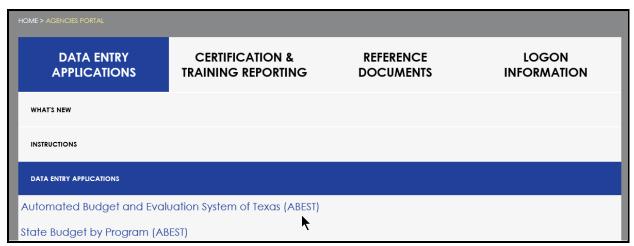


LOGGING IN

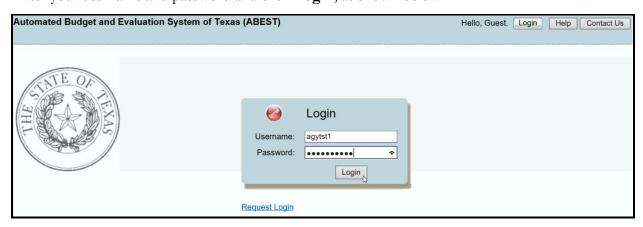
Google Chrome can be used for ABEST data entry. Other browsers (e.g., Firefox, Safari, Microsoft Edge, etc.) will not work consistently and can create problems in the application. The recommended screen resolution is 1280 x 1024, as shown below.



From the LBB website (<u>www.lbb.texas.gov</u>), click **AGENCIES PORTAL**. Under **DATA ENTRY APPLICATIONS**, click on **Automated Budget and Evaluation System of Texas (ABEST)**.



Enter your username and password and click **Login**, as shown below.



TIP



You can also access the **Logon Request Form** mentioned earlier by clicking the **Request Login** hyperlink shown in the previous graphic.

IMPORTANT



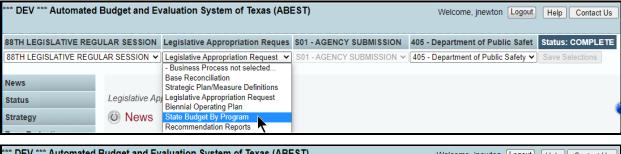
If you already have a user ID and have forgotten the user ID or password, or if your user ID or password does not work, do one of the following:

- Under Logon Information on the LBB's website (www.lbb.texas.gov), click Agency Logon Help. Enter your
 user ID or email address and click Remember Me.
- Call the LBB Help Desk at 512-463-3167.

PROFILE SELECTION AND CONFIRMATION

Upon successfully logging into ABEST, two rows of information with drop-down menu boxes will appear near the top of the screen. The first row is the "user profile confirmation bar" and the second row is the "user profile selection bar." Options selected on the "user profile selection bar" determine the menu layout for a particular business process in ABEST (e.g., Operating Budget, Base Reconciliation, Strategic Plan/Measure Definitions, etc.). The user needs to set their profile by selecting the correct session, business process, stage and agency using the drop-down menu boxes and by saving these selections. The saved selections will appear in the "user profile confirmation bar."

To set your user profile for the business process addressed in these instructions, complete the following steps. From the available drop-down menu boxes, select 88TH LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION, State Budget By Program, S01 – AGENCY SUBMISSION, and your agency. Click Save Selections to update your profile, as shown below.





The options you selected on your "user profile selection bar" will display on the "user profile confirmation bar", as shown below. The agency **Status** associated with these settings is also included on that bar (designated as **EMPTY** in the below example).



The agency **Status** is explained in the following "**IMPORTANT**" box, and is discussed in more detail later in the <u>CHANGING AGENCY STATUS TO INCOMPLETE</u> section of these instructions.

IMPORTANT



Before you enter data into ABEST, verify that you are in the correct session, business process, and agency. Note that you will not be able to access the menus if the agency's **Status** is set to **RESTRICTED** or **LOCKED** (**Status** is located at the right top portion of the "user profile confirmation bar"). The LBB uses these specific statuses to indicate that work is in progress. Other agencies will appear in your agency drop-down menu box when their **Status** is set to **COMPLETE** in ABEST. If the current profile settings (they appear on the same row as the agency **Status**) are not correct, click in the drop-down boxes to select the appropriate settings and click **Save Selections**.

IMPORTANT



Many of the screenshot examples used throughout these instructions include a notation (*****DEV*****) in the upper left corner of the graphic. This notation (*****DEV*****) will not appear on your ABEST screens because it only displays in the test version of ABEST which was used to create the screenshot examples.

NEWS SCREEN

The ABEST **News** screen provides important information and often conveys details about upcoming deadlines. ABEST may direct you to this screen if this is your first time to log in or if the **News** screen has been updated.



HELP

You can view this user instructions manual online or get help based on your screen location. Click the **Help** button to view the entire ABEST user manual, as shown below.



IMPORTANT



If you are not logged into ABEST or have timed out of ABEST and you click the **Help** button, an overview of ABEST will display instead of this user manual. To view the user manual, log into ABEST and click the **Help** button again.

Click the **Help icon** (as shown below) to get detailed information about the screen you are using. The user manual opens and links to the information based on your screen location. The **Help icon** is available on every ABEST screen.

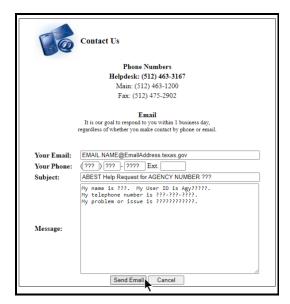


HELP DESK CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact the LBB Help Desk by clicking on **Contact Us**, as shown below.



After clicking on the **Contact Us** button, a window will display as shown below. Enter your message and click **Send Email**.



The LBB Help Desk will respond to email inquiries as soon as possible; however, it can take as long as the end of the next business day in some cases. You can also contact the LBB by calling the Help Desk at 512-463-3167. Be prepared to leave a message when calling the Help Desk. Your call goes directly to voicemail at all times. A typical call back response from the Help Desk is within 30 minutes.

CHANGING AGENCY STATUS TO INCOMPLETE

Click the **Status** menu, as shown below.



Select the **INCOMPLETE** radio button (shown below) and click **Save**.



IMPORTANT



ABEST will not allow you to enter data until you set the agency **Status** to **INCOMPLETE**. As you enter data, closing edits will appear on the **Status** screen. You must clear the edits before you can change your agency **Status** to **COMPLETE** and submit your data electronically. Refer to the <u>CHANGING AGENCY STATUS TO COMPLETE</u> section of these instructions.

DATA ENTRY CONSIDERATIONS

Refer to the following reference table for information on various data entry considerations.

DATA ENTRY REFERENCE		
TEXT LIMITATIONS	ENTERING DATA	SAVING DATA
You may copy text from a word processing application and paste it into ABEST, but you should review it and correct formatting problems if necessary. Bulleted lists may not copy properly. Avoid outline styles that combine numbers and bullets. Numeric fields allow 12 digits maximum. Enter only whole dollar amounts, not decimal places. You do not need to enter commas in numeric fields.	 Click in the data cell and enter the data. Press the Tab key to move across to the next cell. At the end of a row, manually click the cursor in a cell on a new row to enter more data. You can expand some multi-line text fields by double clicking in the field. Use the Enter key to start a new line of text in a multi-line text field or press the Tab key to move out of the field. Save your work by clicking Save. Each expandable multi-line text field provides a character counter and identifies the character limit for that field. In any active data entry cell for numbers, use the built-in calculator by double-clicking in it. After making a calculation and clicking the "=" button, click Send to Grid. The calculated number transfers to the cell. 	 Save data by pressing Enter on your keyboard or by clicking Save on the screen. Use the gray section to add new information to a corresponding grid and click Save.
COLOR CONVENTIONS	IF THE EXPLORER STATUS BAR DOES NOT APPEAR	NAVIGATION
 Unsaved numbers appear blue in color. Saved numbers are black. Grayed out data cells are "read only" and cannot be changed on the grid you are working on.	Open the Tools menu in Internet Explorer and choose Internet options. Click the Security tab and select Trusted Sites. Click the Sites button and enter: *.lbb.texas.gov.	 To move to the top of a long screen, click the Top hyperlink at the bottom of the screen. To move to the bottom of a long screen, click the Bottom hyperlink.

DATA ENTRY CAUTIONS AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CAUTION



You will lose data if ABEST is inactive for 30 minutes or more. Always click "Save" if you leave your computer for more than a few minutes. If ABEST becomes inactive, you must close and reopen your internet browser and log back in. Any unsaved data must be re-entered.

IMPORTANT



Read the News screen when ABEST directs you to it. It often conveys important information regarding changes and upcoming deadlines.

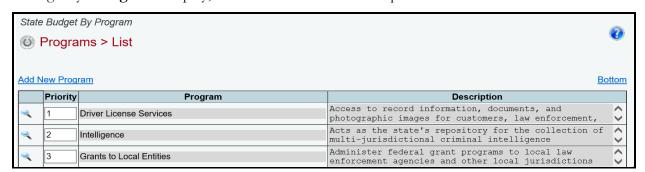
PROGRAM LIST

Programs for SBP Stage 01 - Agency Submission (88R) have been copied over from SBP Stage 51 -Fiscal Size Up (87R). Revisions to programs should be made in your agency's SBP submission to reflect your agency's LAR submission, including combining and breaking out; or otherwise recategorizing existing agency programs.

Click the **Program List** menu, as shown below.



The agency's **Programs** display, as shown in the below example.



TIP



You cannot modify a Program name or Description from the Program List screen. Click on the magnifying glass 🔍 to the left of the Program. The icon directs you to the Program Details screen where you can update these fields.

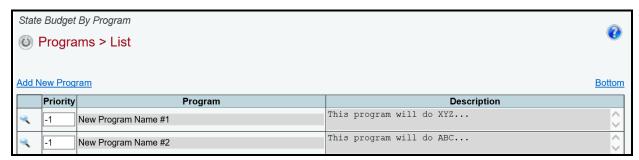


IMPORTANT

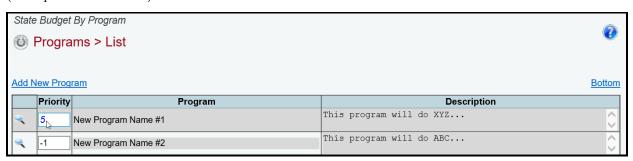


Agency staff cannot delete programs contained in ABEST SBP. If your agency wants to delete a SBP program that is in ABEST, please contact your agency's assigned LBB analyst.

ABEST automatically assigns a value of "-1" to each **Program** entered, which indicates that no priority has been assigned to that specific program by the agency, as shown in the below example.



To assign or change a **Priority** to a **Program**, click in the **Priority** box and enter the desired number (example shown below) and click **Save**.



Review the navigation options in the following **Navigation Options Reference** table. These options will help you navigate easily within the application and are helpful when you have a large amount of data displayed on the screen.

NAVIGATION OPTIONS REFERENCE		
Add New Program	Link directs you to the Program Details screen. You can also access the Program Details screen by clicking the magnifying glass qon the Program List screen or by clicking the Program Details menu.	
Magnifying glass 🔍	Icon directs you to the Program Details screen.	
Top and Bottom	Hyperlink positions the cursor at the top or bottom of the screen.	

PROGRAM DETAILS

Describe the programs and applicable legal citations in the program details. A program description should include, at a minimum, a brief summary of the purpose and general activities of the program. When applicable, a program description should identify the specific beneficiaries, grant recipients, targeted population, and/or specific geographic area affected by the program. Agency staff should keep legislative members and the layperson in mind when identifying agency program information. If revising or adding programs, below is a list of additional considerations for program descriptions.

In general, the program description should not repeat any information provided in other report data elements for that program (agency name, MOF details, program name, legal citations, etc.).

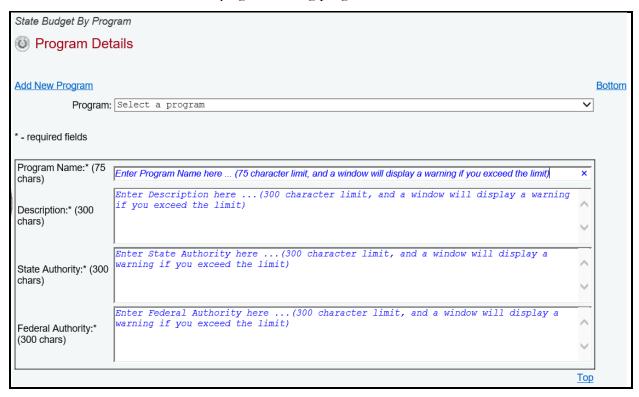
The program description should not provide program or funding level history. Calculations used to disperse formula funding should not be included in program descriptions. If the program name does not indicate the program involves formula funding, the description may note this. Do not include the number of persons served or regulated by a program in descriptions.

The legal citation of the primary state and/or federal law(s) that establishes, requires, or authorizes a program should also be included. If a program is not explicitly authorized by statute, however a rider allows or directs appropriations to be used for the program, the rider should be cited as it appears in the GAA. If the program does not have Federal Funds as a MOF, enter NA.

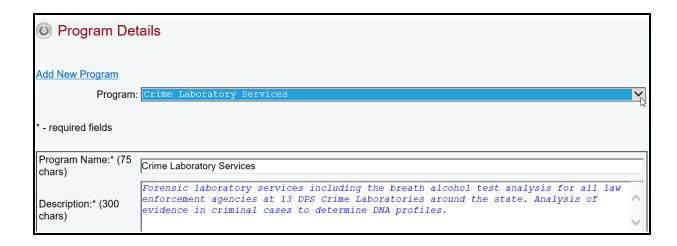
Click the **Program Details** menu, as shown below.



To add a new program, enter the details (as shown in the following example), and click **Save**. An asterisk (*) indicates a required field. Data must be entered in fields that are required. Disregard the **Program** drop-down menu selection box when adding a new item. You will use the **Program** drop-down menu selection when modifying an existing program.



To update an existing program, select the **Program** from the drop-down menu box, modify the appropriate fields (as shown in the following example), and click **Save**.



Repeat the previous steps to add or revise as many programs as needed.

PROGRAM BUDGETING

For each program the Strategy and Method of Finance have been copied from SBP Stage 51 - Fiscal Size Up (87R). You will enter or modify program amounts by Method of Finance for fiscal years 2021, 2022, 2023 and baseline requests and exceptional items for fiscal years 2024 and 2025.

All strategies and methods of finance should add up to your agency's 88R LAR submission strategies and Methods of Finance totals.

Click the **Program Budgeting** menu, as shown below.

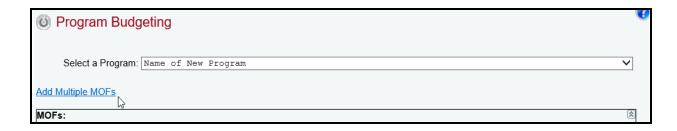


Select a **Program** from the drop-down menu box, as shown below.

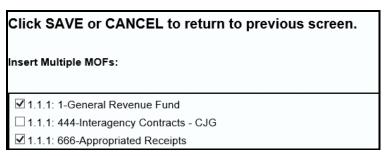


METHODS OF FINANCE (MOFS)

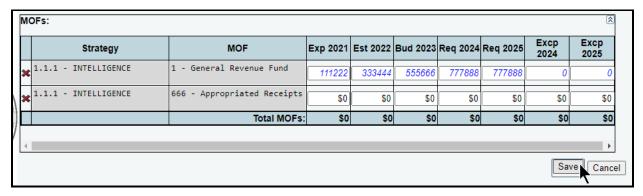
To add MOFs, click the **Add Multiple MOFs** hyperlink as shown in the following example.



Select the appropriate Strategy/MOF combinations (as shown in below example) and click Save.

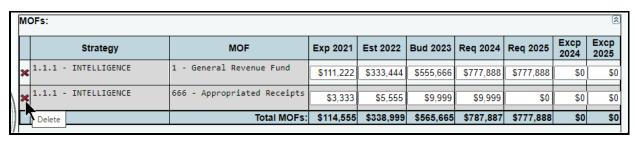


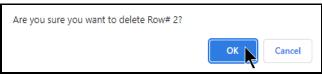
The selected strategies and MOFs display in the grid, as shown in the below example. Enter the dollar amounts for each fiscal year and click **Save**.



Repeat the previous steps to add as many MOFs as needed, for each selected program.

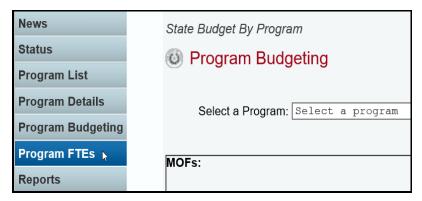
To delete a row, click the red 'x' in the leftmost position (shown in the following example), then click **OK** in the confirmation window.





PROGRAM FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS (FTES)

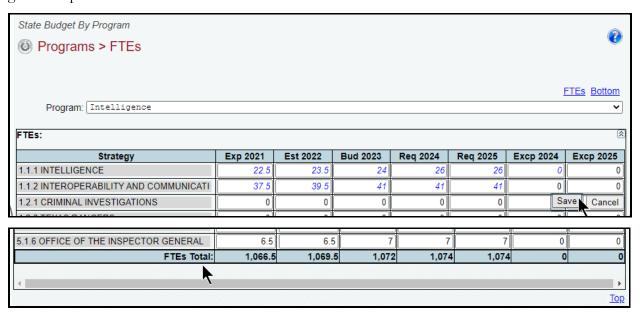
Click the **Program FTEs** menu (as shown below) to enter the FTEs for each program.



Select a **Program** from the drop-down menu box, as shown below.



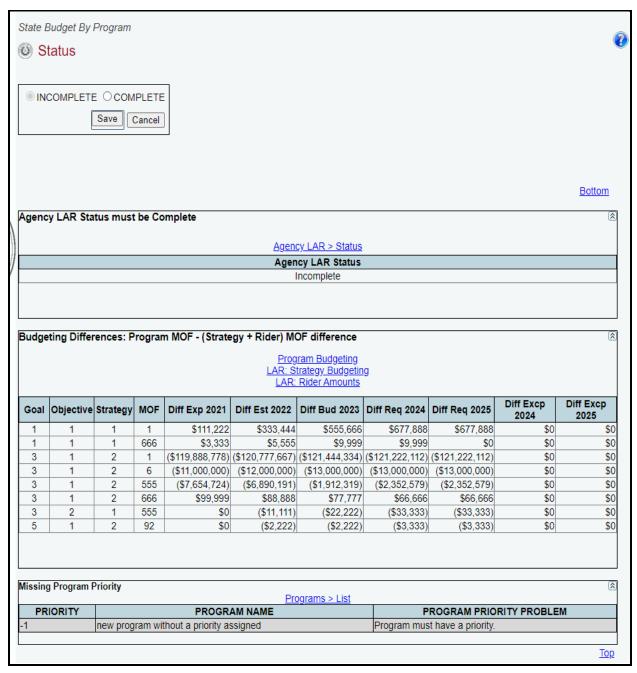
Enter the **FTE** numbers (by strategy and fiscal year) associated with each program (as shown in the following example), and click **Save**. As you save the data, the **FTEs Total** at the bottom of the **FTEs** grid will update.



The **FTEs Total** for all programs for each fiscal year should add up to your agency's 88R LAR submission FTEs totals.

CLOSING EDITS

Closing edits will display on your agency's **Status** menu if required data is not entered or is entered incorrectly. The closing edits provide important information (e.g., fiscal year, MOF, strategy, etc.) about each closing edit issue. Click the **hyperlink displayed in blue** above each closing edit section, as shown in the below example The hyperlink will direct you to the screen location in question, but will not take you to the specific item in question.



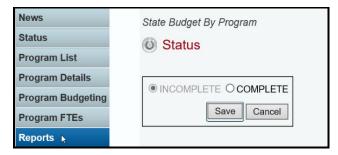
Resolve the items listed on the **Status** screen. The closing edit will disappear from the **Status** screen once the issue is resolved. See the following table for resolutions to closing edits. Your agency **Status** cannot be changed to **COMPLETE** until you correct all errors/closing edits.

RESOLUTIONS FOR CLOSING EDITS		
CLOSING EDIT	RESOLUTION	
Budgeting Differences: Program MOF – (Strategy + Rider) MOF difference	Program amounts must equal LAR amounts (strategy plus rider appropriations/MOF). For stage SBP S01 – Agency Submission click the Program Budgeting menu. Select a Program from the drop-down box. Verify that the MOF amounts displayed here equal the strategy plus rider appropriation MOF amount in your LAR.	
	To verify your agency's LAR totals, change your user profile to 88TH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION, Legislative Appropriation Request, S01 – AGENCY SUBMISSION, and your agency code and click Save Selections. Select the Reports menu and plus sign (+) to the left of the Budget Requests heading. Select the 3.A. Strategy Request report. Verify your activity MOF amounts equal. To modify your agency's LAR entries (if necessary), you will need to adjust entries on the Strategy-Budgeting menu/submenu and or the Rider-Amounts menu/submenu. You will need approval from your agency's LBB analyst to reopen your agency's LAR if the agency Status is set to COMPLETE.	
Missing Program Priority	Each program must have an assigned priority by the agency. Click the Program List menu and click in the Priority box next to any Program name that has a value of "-1." Assign a priority number and click Save .	
Agency LAR Status must be Complete	Agencies are prevented from closing (setting Status to COMPLETE) their SBP submission if the agency has not closed their LAR, Stage 01 submission in ABEST.	
	To set the Agency LAR Status to COMPLETE, change your user profile to 88TH LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION, Legislative Appropriation Request, S01 – AGENCY SUBMISSION, and your agency code and click Save Selections. Then, select the Status menu, click on the COMPLETE radio button, and click Save.	

GENERATING A REPORT

ABEST can produce several reports based on the SBP data your agency submits. You can generate these reports at any time when your agency's **Status** is set to **INCOMPLETE** or **COMPLETE**. However, before printing the final copy of your reports, it is advisable that you complete all your ABEST data entry and change your agency **Status** to **COMPLETE**.

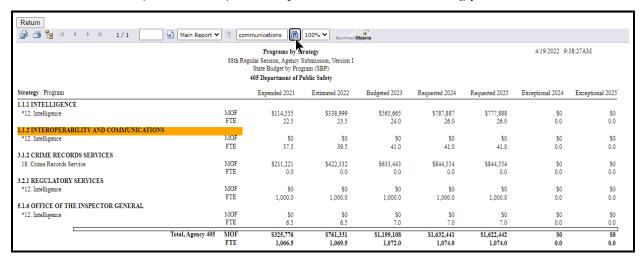
To generate a report, click the **Reports** menu, as shown below.



Click the name of a report to generate that report (example shown below).

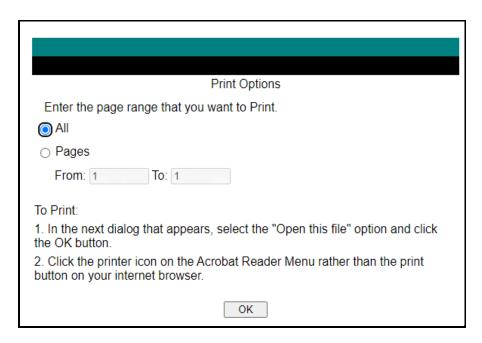


A preview of the report you selected displays, as shown in the following example. Use the arrow keys at the top to navigate through multi-page reports. To use the search feature within the report, click on the **binoculars** icon (shown below) at the top of the screen after entering your search criteria text.



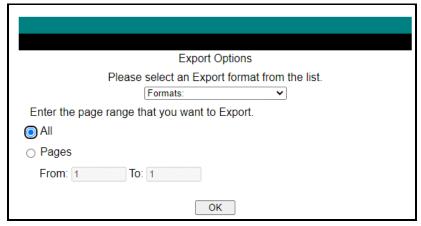
To print the selected report, click the **printer icon** below the **Return** button, as shown in the following example. A **Print Options** window will display, select the desired options, and print. If you click your internet browser's printer icon, the report will not print.



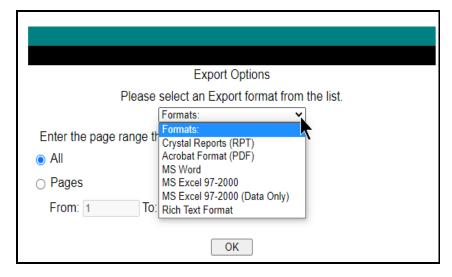


To export the selected report, click the leftmost **export icon** immediately below the **Return** button (shown below). An **Export Options** window will display.





Select the appropriate export format from the drop-down list (as shown below) and click **OK**. The report will download into the appropriate application. Save your file.



Click **Return** (as shown below) to go back to the **Reports** screen.



CHANGING AGENCY STATUS TO COMPLETE

You must change the **Status** for your agency from **INCOMPLETE** to **COMPLETE** to submit your agency's SBP data. Although you can generate and print ABEST reports when your agency **Status** is set to **INCOMPLETE** or **COMPLETE**, you should print the final copies after changing the agency **Status** to **COMPLETE**. Click the **Status** menu, select the **COMPLETE** radio button (as shown below) and click **Save**.



If you have no closing edits, the agency **Status** will change to **COMPLETE** when you click **Save**.

IMPORTANT



If you have problems with the data, they will display on the **Status** screen as closing edits. You cannot change the agency **Status** to **COMPLETE** until you clear the closing edits. Refer to the <u>CLOSING EDITS</u> section of these instructions to resolve any issues. Change your agency **Status** to **COMPLETE** when you have cleared all the closing edits.

After you change the **Status** to **COMPLETE**, your agency's LBB analyst can view the SBP data. Call your agency's LBB analyst if you need to make SBP revisions after you have set the agency **Status** to **COMPLETE**, and the LBB analyst can have the agency **Status** changed to **INCOMPLETE** to enable you to make any needed revisions. You must change the agency **Status** back to **COMPLETE** after making any SBP revisions.